THE LEGEND OF ONIKIRIMARU

CHAPTER 5: THE DEMON MONK OF OUSAKA PASS

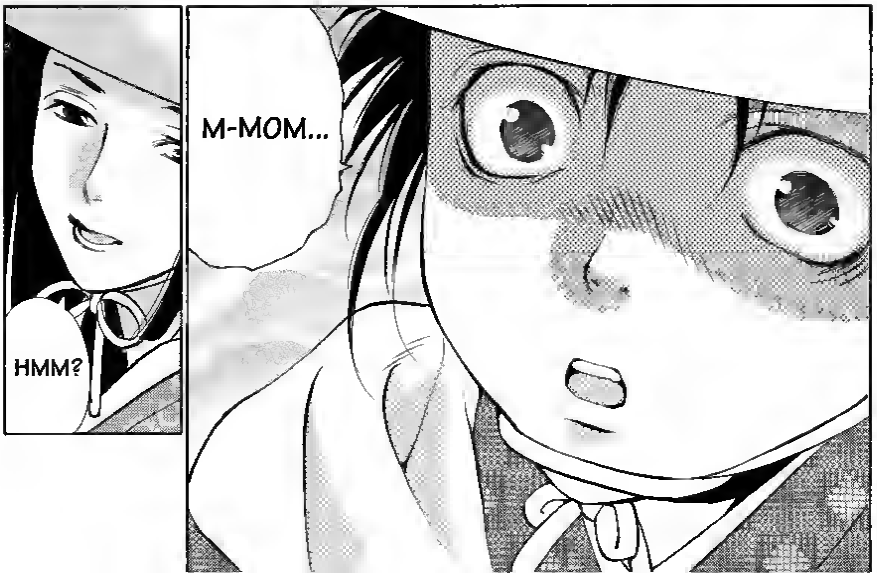
KEI KUSUNOKI

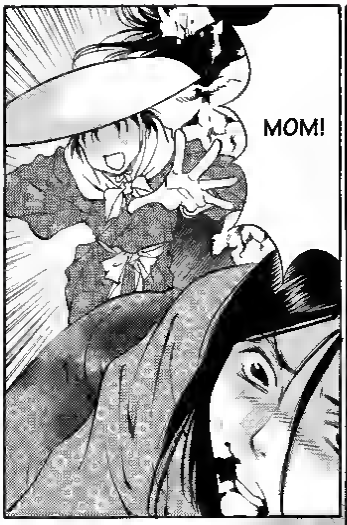
COME ALONG, TASUKE.
MOM, THIS MOUNTAIN'S SCARY! THERE MIGHT BE BANDITS!
IT'S OKAY. THE DEMON OF OUSAKA PASS ATE THEM ALL.
THEN WHAT IF THAT DEMON SHOWS UP?
THIS AND THAT, COMINGS, GOINGS, AND PARTINGS, THE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, AT OUSAKA PASS.
- SEMIMARU

NO NEED TO FEAR. THE DEMONS HAVE A NATURAL ENEMY.
A DEMON, BORN FROM INSIDE A DEMON CALLED SHUTENDOUJI, WHO HOLDS THE ONE BLADE THAT CAN CUT A DEMON'S FLESH.
THE NAME OF THIS POWERFUL BLADE IS ONIKIRIMARU.
HE ONLY KILLS DEMONS. THAT'S WHY HE'S THEIR NATURAL ENEMY.
AND THIS ENEMY OF DEMONS DOESN'T KILL HUMANS?

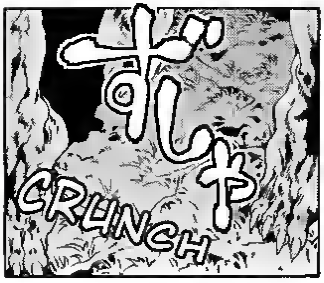
IT MUST BE BECAUSE ONLY A DEMON CAN KILL ANOTHER DEMON.
BUT WHY IS THE NATURAL ENEMY OF THE DEMONS A DEMON? SHOULDN'T IT BE THE BUDDHA?
CRUNCH
NO, MOM! THEN THE NATURAL ENEMY OF THE DEMONS WILL KILL YOU!
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
I'LL PROTECT YOU, EVEN IF IT MEANS BECOMING A DEMON MYSELF
BUT WHAT IF A DEMON SHOWS UP AND THEIR ENEMY DOESN'T APPEAR?

IT'S ALL RIGHT. AS LONG AS I CAN PROTECT YOU, I DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO ME.


HMM?
M-MOM...



THIS IS OUSAKA– THE BOUNDARY WHERE THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT INTERMINGLE.



THIS AND THAT, COMINGS, GOINGS, AND PARTINGS, THE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, AT OUSAKA PASS.
GROWL

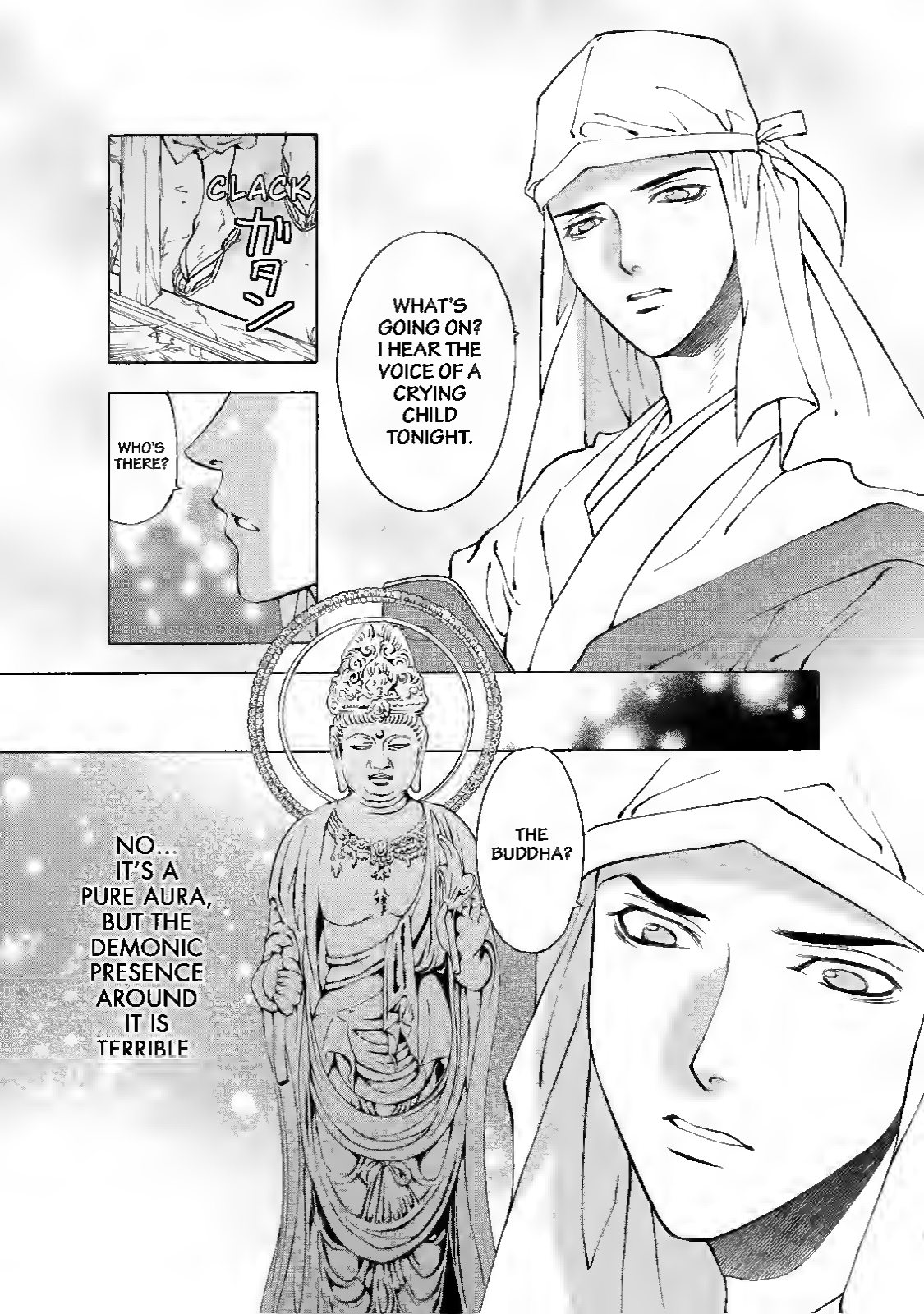
SOMEBODY SAVE US! SAVE MY MOM!
SWOOSH

SHLIP
GYAARGH!
I'VE FOUND YOU, DEMON OF OUSAKA PASS!

SAVE MY MOM!
DON'T GO!
YOU WON'T GET AWAY!
WHEEZE
WHEEZE
WHEEZE
I EXIST ONLY TO SLAY DEMONS.
THAT WOMAN IS ALREADY...

YOU MONSTER!
TASUKE...
YES, THAT'S RIGHT. I'M A DEMON!

IT'S ALL RIGHT. MOM WILL PROTECT YOU NO MATTER WHAT SHE HAS TO DO...
NO! MOM! DON'T DIE!
DON'T... DON'T BECOME A DEMON, MOM!
WAAAH!
WAAAH!
NOW THEN...
TWANG


CLACK
カタン
WHO'S THERE?
WHAT'S GOING ON? I HEAR THE VOICE OF A CRYING CHILD TONIGHT.
THE BUDDHA?
NO... IT'S A PURE AURA, BUT THE DEMONIC PRESENCE AROUND IT IS TERRIBLE

ARE YOU A DEMON GOD?
OH MY.
I'VE FOLLOWED A DEMON HERE. HE DIDN'T COME INSIDE, DID HE?

YOU LIVE HERE? HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN BLIND?
AS YOU CAN SEE, I AM BUT A BLIND BIWA PLAYER. MY NAME IS SEMIMARU. IF THERE WERE A DEMON HERE, IT WOULD HAVE EATEN ME LONG AGO.
SINCE MY BIRTH.
I WAS BORN THE FOURTH SON OF THE EMPEROR DAIGO, BUT WAS ABANDONED ON THIS MOUNTAIN WHEN I WAS YOUNG.
ABANDON SEMIMARU ON OUSAKA MOUNTAIN. IT WAS KARMA FROM A PAST LIFE THAT MADE HIM BLIND.
HE MUST ATONE IN THIS LIFE AND GAIN A BETTER FATE IN THE NEXT ONE.
THIS IS A FATHER'S COMPASSION FOR HIS SON!

...AND THEY SHAVED MY HEAD AND ABANDONED ME IN THE MOUNTAINS.
I WAS GIVEN A HAT, A BIWA, AND A STAFF...
HOW AM I TO ACCEPT THIS AS A FATHER'S COMPASSION FOR HIS SON?
SPLASH
AAH!
ERK
SNAP
THERE IS NO WAY I CAN SURVIVE... NO WAY I CAN LIVE...!
THIS MOUNTAIN IS WHERE THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT INTERMINGLE.

IT IS LIKELY THE PLACE CLOSEST TO HELL.
WAAAH!
SEMI-MARU...
I AM HAKUGA, THE THIRD IN LINE TO THE THRONE.
I'VE FOLLOWED YOU HERE. I WILL BUILD YOU SHELTER FROM THE RAIN.
SEMI-MARU...
THAT VOICE... IS THAT MY SISTER?

SISTER...
THEY CALLED ME MAO AND DROVE ME FROM THE CAPITAL. I MAY BE A CHILD OF THE EMPEROR, BUT NOW I AM A COMMONER.
LET US SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER FROM NOW ON, DEAR SEMIMARU...
IT MATTERS NOT WHERE YOU LIVE. ONE CANNOT LIVE IN THE CAPITAL, OR A STRAW HUT, FOREVER.
AFTER THAT, THEY TOOK CARE OF ME.
AND SO SOMEHOW I MANAGE TO SURVIVE. THUS I MAKE MY LIVING PLAYING MY BIWA TO CALM THE SOULS OF THE DEAD.
TWANG

WHERE ARE YOUR SISTER AND THIS OTHER MAN? ARE THEY BRINGING YOU YOUR FEED?
THEY DO BRING ME FOOD, BUT...
"FEED"?
IS IT DRIPPING WITH BLOOD? IS IT WARM?
OH? WHAT SORT OF FOOD?
THIS PERSON... WHAT IS HE IMPLYING?
I AM BLIND, SO I COULDN'T SAY ANYTHING EXCEPT THAT IT IS A KIND OF MEAT.

IT'S SAID THERE ARE TWO DEMONS HERE IN OUSAKA PASS WHO ATTACKED BANDITS. BUT NOW THAT THE BANDITS ARE ALL DEAD, THEY'VE TURNED TO ATTACKING TRAVELERS.
A MOTHER AND CHILD WERE JUST ATTACKED ON THE ROAD BY THOSE DEMONS.
THEN THAT CRYING CHILD JUST NOW...
DO YOU KEEP THE DEMONS AS PETS? OR DO THEY KEEP *YOU* AS A PET?
OR ARE YOU PERHAPS THE DEMON, SEMIMARU?!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. I'M BLIND, SO ALL I CAN DO IS PLAY THE BIWA.
WHAT A TERRIFYING DEMONIC AURA...
TWANG
TWANG

TWANG
THERE YOU ARE, DEMONS!
WHAT?

WAIT! THAT'S MY SISTER AND HAKUGA!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? THEY'RE DEMONS!
GRRR
WITHOUT THEM, I WOULD'VE DIED! THEY SAVED MY LIFE!

斬!!!
SLICE!
MY SISTER AND HAKUGA'S AURAS HAVE DISAPPEARED...

OH... OH, NO...
WHEN I WAS YOUNG AND HELPLESS, THEY TOOK CARE OF ME.
I DON'T CARE IF THEY'RE DEMONS OR NOT.
WHY DO YOU WEEP? THEY WERE DEMONS.
EVEN IF THEY WERE DEMONS, THEY WERE VERY KIND TO ME.

IF NOTHING ELSE, THEY WERE KINDER THAN THE EMPEROR WHO ABANDONED ME HERE!
ENOUGH, SEMIMARU.
YOU ARE BLIND, AND SO YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO SENSE SOMETHING'S TRUE NATURE. THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULDN'T TELL THEY WERE DEMONS.
IN OTHER WORDS, THE REASON YOU WEREN'T EATEN IS BECAUSE YOU ARE A DEMON AS WELL!

SEMIMARU, YOU WERE ABANDONED IN THE MOUNTAINS OVER A HUNDRED YEARS AGO!

A H-HUNDRED?

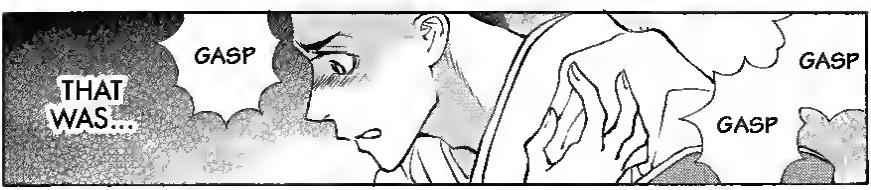
THAT'S IMPOSSI-BLE!

I WANT TO LIVE.
I JUST WANTED TO SURVIVE.
NO... NO...

I WANT TO SURVIVE.
I WANT TO LIVE.
CRACK
CRACK
CRICK
I SEE...
SO THE DEMON IS A PART OF YOU THAT YOU YOURSELF CREATED!

I WILL SURVIVE, NO MATTER WHAT I HAVE TO DO, OR WHO I HAVE TO EAT!
ROAR

SKREEE


GASP
GASP
GASP
THAT WAS...

THAT DEMON WAS BORN FROM MY BODY?

YES, THAT'S RIGHT. THIS HAPPENED BEFORE!

ROAR
I WILL LIVE LONGER THAN MY FATHER WHO ABANDONED ME HERE, LONGER THAN ANYONE!

THERE'S NO WAY I CAN LIVE. THERE'S NO WAY I CAN SURVIVE.
NO, I WILL LIVE, DAMN IT!

WHERE DID THAT VOICE COME FROM?

SISTER, HAKUGA... THANK YOU FOR ALWAYS BRINGING ME FOOD.
I WAS ALREADY A DEMON THEN?!

I JUST WANTED TO LIVE...
KLANG
KLANG
KLANG
CRACK
WAS IT SO WRONG TO WISH FOR THAT?

I WANT TO LIVE! I WANT TO LIVE!
I WANT TO LIVE!

GYAH!
SEMI-
MARU!

SO AT LEAST YOU WERE ABLE TO DIE AS A HUMAN INSTEAD OF A DEMON, SEMIMARU...
SEMIMARU JUST WANTED TO LIVE...
IF MY MOTHER'S WISH TO LIVE HAD BEEN STRONG ENOUGH, SHE WOULD'VE BECOME A DEMON TOO, AND WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN EATEN.
AAAAH

SHE SERVED THE BUDDHA AND BELIEVED IN HIM, BUT HER UGLINESS MADE THE VILLAGERS PERSECUTE HER! AND SHE WAS A HUMAN WOMAN WHO FORGAVE THEM.
A POOR WOMAN WHO WAS EATEN BY SHU-TENDOUJI WHILE I WAS STILL INSIDE HER.
IF SHE HAD BECOME A DEMON, WOULD SHE HAVE SURVIVED, AND STILL BEEN HERE WITH ME?
HUMANS KILL HUMANS, AND IF THE GODS AREN'T WORSHIPPED, THEY'RE NO DIFFERENT THAN DEMONS!
THAT'S RIGHT, THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HUMANS, DEMONS, AND GODS!

PLEASE...
WHAT? SHE'S STILL HUMAN? SHE'S NOT TURNED INTO A DEMON?
TAKE TASUKE... TAKE MY SON TO THE VILLAGE.
WOMAN, IF YOU'VE BECOME A DEMON, I WILL KILL YOU.

IF YOU DO THAT, MY SOUL WILL BE SAVED.
TASUKE.
SOB.
SOB
SOB
COME, I'LL LEAD YOU THE VILLAGE.
H-HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?
YOUR MOTHER ASKED ME TO.

MY MOM?
RUB
RUB
I DON'T HAVE A NAME, THOUGH.
I KNOW YOU TOO. AT LEAST, I KNOW THE NAME OF YOUR SWORD.
IT'S ONIKIRIMARU, THE ONE BLADE THAT CUTS A DEMON'S FLESH, RIGHT?
THIS BLADE IS ONIKIRIMARU, THE NATURAL ENEMY OF THE DEMONS.
HUMANS, DEMONS, AND GODS ARE ALL THE SAME. THE NAMELESS YOUNG MAN REALIZED THAT.
YES, THAT'S RIGHT.
THE LEGEND OF ONIKIRIMARU THE DEMON MONK OF OUSAKA PASS COMPLETE